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THE CITIES OF REFUGE

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THE CITIES OF REFUGE

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PICTURES OF GOSPEL-PRINCIPLES, GOSPEL-
PROMISES, AND GOSPEL-PRIVILEGES

BY THE
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Nova Scotia.*

WITH PREFATORY NOTE BY THE
RIGHT REV. HANDLEY C. G. MOULE, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

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Prefatory Note

BY THE BISHOP OF DURHAM

I WISH this book “good luck in the name of the Lord.” To me it has carried many a message of instruction, suggestion and encouragement. The treatment of the Types of the Old Testament calls of course for much humble reserve when we come to details; for even where the general reference of a Type to Christ is most certain it is possible to carry references in detail too far. But Archdeacon Armitage has both selected a Type which is certain in its reference, for Heb. vi. 18 fixes it distinctly, for the believer, when it tells us that it is to the Lord Jesus Christ that we “*fly for refuge* to lay hold on the hope set before us.” And then he has treated that Type with a reverent abstinence from overdrawn detail, yet with a beautifully distinct line of exposition. For myself, I have been struck with the spiritual fitness, in almost every instance, of his “application” of *the names* of the Refuge Cities,

finding in each of them a reminder of some one of the glorious characters of Him who is our Hiding-place and our Abode.

May the volume carry to very many Christian hearts an errand of grace and peace, to the glory of our Lord.

HANDLEY DUNELM.

Preface

THE object of this book is to aid in the development of the spiritual life. Its aim is practical rather than theoretical. It is intended especially to serve devotional ends, and to furnish food for meditation to Christian hearts, on the different aspects of Christ's life, character, and work.

The author is conscious of the danger of pushing too far a method of interpretation which does not appeal with equal force to all minds; but he believes that the inferences which he draws from the Cities of Refuge, their purpose, and their use, are all in complete accordance with the best traditions of devotional study of the Word of God.

It is only in the broad sense of the term that the Cities of Refuge are used as types, and along the liberal lines indicated by Professor A. B. Davidson, who held that "a type is a fact that teaches a moral truth and predicts some actual realisation of that truth." Indeed, the thought

in the writer's mind is rather the modern one of illustration. He is far from asserting that the Cities of Refuge were originally chosen because of the significance of their names, and that the derived ideas which have grown up around them, were necessarily in the minds of those to whom the revelation was first given. There is abundant Biblical analogy, however, for their figurative use, and Biblical students in all generations have felt perfectly free to employ them.

In any case, whether the individual cities are used as types or as illustrations, the aspects of Christ's life and work which are here described, and from which many spiritual lessons are drawn, are true to fact, consistent with the Christian Revelation, and should yield, with the blessing of God, and the light and leading of His Holy Spirit, instruction and edification to Christian people. It is my earnest prayer that every reader may enter into the fulness of privilege provided for the Christian believer, and find in Jesus Christ a refuge both for time and for eternity.

W. J. ARMITAGE.

The Cities of Refuge

"Among the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, there shall be six cities for Refuge."—Numb. xxxv. 6.

"The Lord is my Refuge."—Ps. xciv. 22. (P.B.V.)

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress ; My God, in Him will I trust."—Ps. xci. 2.

"We may have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us."—Heb. vi. 18 (R.V.).

"Some soul may hence discern the truth of the Gospel-Refuge."—*Dean Law*.

"Christ is a believer's City of Refuge, or the alone sanctuary for distressed souls."—*Dr. Thos. Manton*.

"Typically . . . these cities show us three things—Our Danger, our Refuge, our Safety."—*Canon Clayton*.

"Other Refuge have I none."—*Charles Wesley*.

"And may it some persuade, that go astray,
To turn their feet and heart to the right way."

John Bunyan.

"The path of life we walk to-day

Is strange as that the Hebrews trod ;
We need the shadowing rock, as they,
We need, like them, the guides of God."

J. G. Whittier.

"How blest are they who still abide
Close shelter'd in Thy bleeding side,
Who life and strength from thence derive,
And by Thee move, and in Thee live."

Zinzendorf.

“ Our City of defence, to Thee,
From the avenger, Lord we flee,
Who in Thy Death confide ;
Justice divine pursues in vain
The men who God Himself have slain,
When sheltered in Thy side.”

Charles Wesley.

“ *Six* Refuge Cities—all in *ONE* !
For Christ is ‘ all in all ! ’
And they who are in *Him*, are where
No evil can befall.
But *out of Him* no Refuge is—
No other Name ’neath heaven
To be the sinner’s hiding place
Hath God to mortals given.”

J. E. J.

Jesus Christ our Refuge

Jesus Christ our Refuge

THE ample and perfect security which there is in Christ, for every trusting soul, was remarkably foreshadowed in the Old Testament. There were many types of Christ, which, like stars in the night, shone for a season and then passed away. There were numbers of beautiful and expressive emblems which suggested deep and all important truths, awakening faith and hope in the spiritual and eternal, in the light of which many souls rejoiced ; they were, however, at best, merely temporary in their character. The guiding cloud, the gracious manna, the refreshing stream, while God-given, and fruitful in lessons for all time, ended as the Israelites crossed the Jordan. There is a gospel in the old covenant, but it lies still in the shadow ; the Christ life, the truth of God, is but dimly seen. We may say of type, and figure, and emblem, and symbol :—

“They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

But in the Cities of Refuge, seal of the Gospel-fact, that Christ is a sure and an eternal refuge, as Dean Law so well remarked, we have a sign which lived through the history of God's ancient people. "It never failed until the cross was reared." And as Dr. Adam Clarke said, the whole of the Gospel could be preached from them.

The divine institution of the Cities of Refuge was based upon the sanctity of the life of man, connected with the kindred thought of the preciousness of human blood. The fruitful idea that the individual man has an endless value in the sight of God, was, as Professor Jowett pointed out, "foreign to the age of Plato," but it was largely realised in the early history of Israel. Israel above all the nations of the earth set true worth upon the value of man as man.

The national spirit seemed to say:—

"But for Adam's seed, MAN! Trust me, 'tis a clay above
your scorning,
With God's image stamp'd upon it, and God's kindling
breath within."

And while the legislation was intended for an imperfect state of society, and provided for conditions of a primitive character, for a people still in the childhood of the race, yet it was a step towards a more perfect system, merciful in character, reformatory in purpose, and uplifting in design. The criticism which cavils at the Mosaic laws is frequently due to failure to observe and

appreciate the significance of the progressive element in revelation. There is progress in revelation, and necessarily so, on account of the imperfection of human society deeply affected by sin.

The City of Refuge on earth typified in some measure the heavenly Jerusalem. The Old Testament dispensation was preparatory in its nature, admirably adapted to meet the conditions of the people and the times, and pointed forward to ideal perfection only to be realized in Jesus Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

In the Jewish economy appointed of God for the settlement of the Promised Land, at least six Cities of Refuge were especially set apart and given rights of asylum under certain well-defined conditions. The number six, which in the symbology of Scripture would appear to imply some degree of human imperfection, falling short as it does of seven, that is complete or divine perfection, is not without significance. It was intended that they should afford shelter and protection to those who committed homicide unintentionally, or, in the language of the Scripture, unawares and unwittingly.

It is always possible that, through accident, and without premeditation, or through ignorance, and without intention, one might be the cause of the death of another.

Among the customs of the East, which

have come down even to modern times, there is one which gave the next-of-kin the right of taking vengeance for the blood shed. The Hebrews, feeling above others the sacredness of human life, bound together by closer ties, and with the words of the Divine revelation ever before them, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," gave large place in their minds to the duty of the next-of-kin to be an avenger of his brother's death. He was looked upon as a righteous avenger of murder, and his rights were as firmly established as any by court of law. In fact he was the instrument of law, and simply did what we now assign to the officers of the crown. There is no satisfactory equivalent in English, Professor Buchanan Gray thinks, for the Hebrew word *Go'el*, for "his mission," as Clay Trumbull points out, "was not vengeance, but equity. He was not an avenger, but a redeemer, a restorer, a balancer."

The *Go'el*, the Redeemer, as a point of honour, took vengeance upon the person who had slain his kinsman. But it was not allowed to take the form of lawless or merely personal revenge, or to degenerate into family strife. Its bounds were carefully set. And in the Divine plan under the covenant the motive was judged, man was treated as a free moral agent, responsibility was fixed, and the whole question was lifted from the lower

level of mere blood revenge, and given ethical significance.

Layard, in his "Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon," declares that however repugnant it may seem to our ideas of justice, it must be "admitted that no power vested in any one individual, and no punishment, however severe, could tend more to the maintenance of order and the prevention of bloodshed amongst the wild tribes of the desert." Dr. Selah Merrill says, that it was "one of the most humane features of ancient civilisation." The Mosaic law by this provision, while it upheld the sanctity of human life and inspired horror at the thought of the shedding of blood, even by accident, furnished a large measure of protection to the innocent.

The word city in ancient times carried with it the idea of protection. "Cities," we are told, "whether in Babylonia or in Palestine were, at first, simply fortified dwellings of clansmen." The earliest city of which we read was founded for that purpose. Cain built the first city and called it after the name of his son Enoch. The city of Enoch was not, of course, a city in the modern sense, with its civil government, its lines of streets and squares, its houses and factories, its churches and shops; but a fortified place, built for the greater protection of those who congregated together for safety and

social intercourse. The etymology of the word is obscure, but it seems probable that, its first and leading thought, like the Saxon "burg," is that of security. The Code of Hammurabi, and other indications, show that city organisation with the Assyro-Babylonians was far more advanced and progressive, than is generally supposed. In later times the term gained a wider significance, and to the Greeks and Romans a city furnished opportunity for collective and corporate life upon social and political lines.

The Cities of Refuge were so placed, three on either side of Jordan, that they provided the greatest possible readiness of access. The devout imagination has always pictured for the cities, conditions almost ideal in character. The gates of the cities, like those of the new Jerusalem, were to be kept always open, both day and night. The approach to them was to be the easiest possible, with good roads, at least twice the ordinary regulation width, and kept constantly in thorough repair. All obstructions were to be carefully removed that might offer the least hindrance to the runner in his flight. All hills were levelled wherever possible, and the streams bridged. There were sign-posts provided at every turn in the road, and at the cross-roads, with the inscription upon them, "*Miklat*," "*Miklat*," "Refuge," "Refuge," in plain characters, so that he that ran might read. In the cities themselves an

abundant supply of food and water was to be constantly kept against all exigencies which might arise, and no weapons of war were to be allowed within the walls.

It was far otherwise in every other system in primitive times, and indeed in later days, for the right of vengeance for wrongs inflicted upon a member of the social unit whether it was the clan or the family has been claimed within recent years. The Corsican *vendetta* still exists, as may be seen in the pages of the daily press, and is a fruitful theme for fiction. It is prevalent in Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. It has shown itself in the Italian form in the United States, but existed there long before in some of the States, at least under the name of feud. The blood-feud was for centuries the curse of the borderland between England and Scotland, and, as in the case of the Scott and Kerr families, was carried through many generations. It gave the turbulent Armstrongs a firmer hold upon their own blood relations and struck terror into the hearts of their enemies.

The spirit of the ancient feud still lives in Ireland, and there are many instances where the family of the slain claimed the right, and exercised it whenever possible, to exact an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, until vengeance was completed upon the slayer and his kin. The result has been in Ireland as in Italy that the

death of one person has often led to the sacrifice of many lives.

The ancient system which provided an asylum for those who fled from the avenger of blood, would naturally lead to many grave abuses unless carefully regulated. Daun tells us that the "asyla" of the Greeks, Romans, and Germans, enabled the criminal who was amenable to the laws, to escape the sentence he justly merited. In many countries, as Driver points out, a money compensation was "accepted by the relatives of a murdered man as a satisfaction for his life." It was so amongst the Greeks and Germans, and, Freeman thinks, amongst the Saxons as well. It still obtains amongst the Arabs, and is indeed recognized by the laws of Mohammed.

"Hebrew law," as Professor Buchanan Gray well points out, "marks a very distinct advance by so modifying primitive custom as to secure an 'adequate' punishment for the 'individual' guilty of murder, and a clear distinction between accidental and wilful homicide." In the Hebrew view there is no possible compensation adequate to cover the loss of a human life, "murder can be atoned for only by the blood of the murderer." The wilful murderer, under the Jewish law, as we read in Exodus xxi. 14, the briefest and most ancient statement of the law of homicide, was to be torn even from the altar of God, and put to death. He had no rights of sanctuary. Justice

compelled him to stand at the bar of judgment for his crime.

The Cities of Refuge were provided to cover unintentional acts of murder, and these alone. The refugee, as Professor Gray states, could obtain protection only until such time as it could be "legally determined whether death was inflicted wilfully or accidentally." Otherwise, as Calvin remarked, "the kindred of those who had been killed would have doubled the evil." The law, then, was not only just and equitable, but in the highest interest of the community, private as well as public. As Professor Keil says, "we have in this arrangement a manifestation of the perfect rigour of divine justice in the most beautiful concord with compassionate mercy."

The refugee, whether an Israelite or a stranger, was safe the moment he entered the gate of the city of refuge. But as a safeguard, and in order not to screen real criminals, the elders of the city and of the place from which he came instituted an inquiry into the facts of the case, and reached a decision as to whether the act was involuntary or the result of malice. If he was pronounced a murderer, the nearest kinsman of the person slain executed in his own person the sentence of death. If he was adjudged innocent of wilful murder, he was protected in the city of refuge, and on the death of the high priest he was no longer counted

as a fugitive, but was allowed to return home to his relatives and friends.

This merciful provision of the Cities of Refuge acted as a preventive to idolatry; the involuntary man-slayer was not driven to seek a home among the heathen nations around, but was allowed to live in his own land, among his own kindred, who held like him the faith in Israel's God.

The Cities of Refuge were not merely civil institutions serving a local purpose. They were also types of heavenly things, and taught the people lessons of the very deepest significance. Should any one claim that they were not actually "types," surely no one will deny that at least they most marvellously illustrated the revelation of God. We venture to use the word "type," in its larger theological significance, as suggestive at least of similarity, identity, and predictiveness. Professor A. B. Davidson defines a type, in language much less restrictive than that of many modern theologians. "A type," he says, "is a fact that teaches a moral truth and predicts some actual realisation of that truth." This gives us much larger room in which to move in our interpretation of the revelation of God's mind and will in the Old Testament. We are able to enjoy the full fruitage of that which was seen before only in bud and blossom. For "a typical dispensation is one related to the dispensation of which it is typical, as a bud is to the flower, as a

miniature to a portrait, as a sketch or outline to a filled-in picture."

Philo, the prince of uninspired allegorical writers, who was contemporary with our blessed Lord, but whose chief works appeared before the New Testament writings, and who represents the high water mark of Jewish philosophy, saw in the Cities of Refuge God's thought for men. While it is true that Philo did not know Jesus Christ as Saviour, yet his teaching shows the trend of Israel's hope which centred in the promised Christ of God.

The Cities of Refuge in Philo's teaching are six in number, and correspond with six divine powers. He says that the oldest and the best, the metropolitan city is the Divine Logos, or Thought. Philo never reached the truth which St. John gave under inspiration to the Christian Church, that the Logos was not only with God, but was God. Still he taught clearly, and it was marvellous for an uninspired man to do so, that the Logos is the thought of God, and although he said that God Himself is higher, yet three times at least he called the Logos a God.

The Logos, Philo taught, is the Mother-city, not merely one of a number. It is the most profitable to fly to, but only the swiftest runners can hope to gain it. It is the highest city, the fountain of wisdom, from thence is drawn, instead of death, eternal life.

The other five cities are what might be called colonies of the Mother-city, the Divine Logos. The foremost is the Creative power, for by a word He made the universe. The second is the Regal, the kingly power by which He rules what He has made. The third is the Propitious, through which He shows mercy and displays the spirit of compassion, as a God of grace. The fourth is the Preceptive, by which He teaches, giving instruction by precept for the regulation of conduct. The fifth is Prohibitive, by which He forbids that which is wrong, forbidding it with all the authority of His perfect law. These five cities, colonies of the great Mother-city, correspond with five powers of Him Who speaks—the Word or Logos.

The Cities of Refuge embodied in themselves truths of the highest importance concerning the salvation of God, and His provision of grace and security for His children. They were pictures of the Gospel, they foretold the way of salvation, they illustrated in many different ways the mission and work of the Divine Redeemer. They pointed to Christ in His office of our great High Priest, in His work as Redeemer and Saviour. They were an object-lesson of the meaning of sin, of the punishment which it deserves, of the only means of escape from it, and they furnished a marvellous resemblance to the way of salvation in Christ our only refuge.

The Cities of Refuge point to Christ as the sinner's refuge, and that in more ways than one. They are found on careful and prayerful study to suggest Gospel-principles, Gospel-promises, Gospel-privileges. Christ is Himself the city of refuge.

The six Cities of Refuge belonged to the priestly tribe of Levi. The forty-eight cities of Levi possessed the right of asylum, but the six Cities of Refuge were bound to receive and to entertain, without cost, the involuntary homicide. They were priestly cities, with peculiar privileges of their own.

The refugee, flying from the avenger, had but to pass through the gate, and not only was he immune, free from the slightest danger, but he ranked at once as a fellow-citizen with the priests of the Most High God. The levitical or priestly cities were selected, because they belonged to Jehovah Himself, and were under His special protection as well as recipients of His grace. There, if anywhere, the administration of justice would reach its highest point. Social life would also be at its best. There would be opportunities for education, and the cities would naturally yield instruction to the refugee, as well as adequate protection to his life. The cities would also be pervaded by a religious atmosphere. The conditions were, therefore, the best possible, whether viewed from the legislative, social, scholastic, or spiritual standpoint.

Jesus Christ is our first and only Priest. The Levitical priesthood which pointed to Him has been realised and fulfilled in His life and work.

Jesus Christ is the one eternal High Priest, through whom salvation comes to man, and in whom man has communion with God. The Levitical priesthood was limited by imperfection and changes. The priesthood of Christ is eternal, perfect, inviolable, intransmissible (*ἀπαράβατον*), all-powerful, and all-prevailing. He is our Priest upon the throne of the Divine Majesty, the sovereign Lord over all, God blessed forever. He is the sole and perfect mediator between God and men ; He receives the trustful, penitent soul, and saves to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him ; He is the sinner's refuge, his only hope, his life, his all ; He is, in Himself, the living way ; in His own person He is the bridge that spans the great gulf of eternity ; the ladder set up from earth to heaven ; the world's great altar stairs, which lead from man to God. The very name Jesus means saviour, and the Scriptures declare that there is salvation in Him alone, "neither is there salvation in any other." He is the world's sole refuge. There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved.

"Other refuge have I none.

Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

The Christian believer stands safe and secure within this refuge. He dwells in the secret place

of the Most High. It is to him an everlasting home, full of glory, full of joy unspeakable, and of light that never fades away. He has passed out of the condition of ruin, of degradation, of death, into the life of Christ, and has become an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, a partaker of the heavenly glory. He is now a priest and a king, in the city of his God, from which he is to go no more out forever.

The Sanctuary which Christ is to His people, through the grace of God, is an eternal refuge. The life upon which the Christian enters is everlasting. In the ancient city of refuge, when Israel's High Priest died, the refugee left the sheltering walls of the city, and returned to his old home. But our great High Priest ever liveth, and in Him we constantly abide. "In Christ," there is safety, and merciful provision, for time and for eternity. His precious blood completely cleanses from all sin. His perfect love casts out all fear. His grace is sufficient for every need.

Jesus Christ is not only the divinely appointed way of escape, He is, in Himself, the city of refuge. "I have no hope in what I have been or am," said the saintly Dr. Doddridge on his dying bed, "yet I am full of confidence; and this is my confidence: there is a hope set before me, I have fled, I still fly for refuge to that hope. In Him I trust; in Him I have strong consolation,

and shall assuredly be accepted in this beloved of my soul." "Believe a dying man," said the great Dr. Johnson to his physician, "there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God."

Jesus Christ our Sanctuary

“A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place
of our sanctuary.”—*Jer.* xvii. 12.

“Whither, O whither should I fly,
But to my loving Saviour’s breast?
Secure within Thine arms to lie,
And safe beneath Thy wings to rest.”

Charles Wesley.

“I need Thee, *Holy* Saviour!
For sin defileth me;
And only in *Thy holiness*
Could I my Father see.”

“Sin Thou has blotted out, and Thou
Our ‘*Kedesh*’ City art;
Our ‘*Shechem*,’ too, Thou *bearest us*,
The ‘signet’ on Thine heart.”

J. E. J.

“Israel, in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn’d the Gospel too;
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw the Saviour’s face.”

Wm. Cowper.

1. Kēdesh

THE first in order of the Cities of Refuge, according to the Book of Joshua, appointed, or “sanctified,” (as the marginal reading suggests), by God was Kēdesh, in Galilee, in Mount Naphthali. It was beautifully situated on a lofty ridge about twenty miles from Tyre. It was surrounded by a well-watered plain, which had been highly cultivated and sustained a large population.

The city itself was splendidly fortified against attack. It is notable as the birthplace and residence of Barak, and it was there that he and Deborah assembled the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali when they “jeopardied their lives unto the death” in the great battle against Sisera, the captain of the hosts of Canaan. It was afterwards known as Cades, and is now called Kedes.

The name Kēdesh means set apart, a sanctuary, a holy city. The eminent Hebraist, Fürst, says קָדֵשׁ *Kādhāsh*, signifies to be fresh, pure, bright, holy; to be consecrated, sanctified, set apart to a sacred use, while קֶדֶשׁ *Kēdesh*,

the noun, means : Sanctuary, seat of worship. The Oxford Gesenius, which, while it retains the massive learning of the great lexicographer, embodies the best results of the latest Hebrew scholarship, through the combined labours of Professors Driver, Brown, and Briggs, says that the verb furnishes the original idea of separation, withdrawal, apartness, sacredness, holiness ; while the noun means Sanctuary.

The first thought connected with sanctuary is that it is a sacred or consecrated place. A temple implies a sanctuary, and the word as used in the Old Testament is well defined in Exodus, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." But the word sanctuary has a wider meaning. It is a sacred asylum or refuge, a place of protection. It is also used in the sense of rights of sanctuary, of the privileges attached to certain places by virtue of which accused persons, when they fled to them, were able to obtain protection for a longer or shorter period.

The sanctuary, to the saints of old, meant any place in which God deigned to dwell or to manifest Himself. Thus Jacob, when he awoke from the dream, in which God visited him with such manifest lessons of His loving care, said, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So William Cowper, the Christian poet, could write,

“Where’er they seek Thee Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.”

But God also met His people in a special manner in His house. “Ye shall reverence my sanctuary.” The tabernacle was His sanctuary, as was also the temple, afterwards, and indeed the synagogues also, as places set apart for prayer and the study of the Divine Word.

The holy of holies was also designated the sanctuary. The altar furnished rights of asylum in Israel. At the corners of the altar were four horn-shaped wooden projections overlaid with brass, to which the victims were tied in sacrifice, and which were smeared with blood in the sin offering. The symbolical meaning of the horns was might, and they were object lessons of the mighty salvation and the perfect security which God gives to the believing soul in approaching Him, and of the mercy which He offers to the sons of men. Here was the inviolable sanctuary, grasping which the refugee, if free from criminal intent, was safe from the strongest, for his appeal was not only to the mercy of man, but also to the protection of the Almighty. It was this sanctuary which Adonijah sought when he “feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar” (1 Kings i. 50). The unhappy prince refused to leave this sure sanctuary, unless Solomon under solemn oath would give him a promise of safe-keeping. So Joab,

for the same cause, "fled into the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar."

As a general principle all heathen temples and altars afforded the privileges of sanctuary, protected by the rule that it was a sacrilegious act to attempt to remove by force, or to offer bodily harm to any person who had sought the protection of a deity. The provision made in the Jewish economy by which a refugee was kept free of all expense for good, did not obtain, however, amongst the heathen, and he was only allowed to remain while his means lasted. The celebrated temple of Diana at Ephesus acquired rights of protection, even beyond its own boundary walls, and made a part of the city proper a sanctuary. Grote tells us, in his history of Greece, that Pleistoanax, king of Sparta, lived for a long time in sanctuary, near the temple of Athene at Tegea.

We read in the Book of Judges that the house of the god Berith (El-berith) in Shechem contained an asylum, or place of refuge in a "hold," for one thousand men.

In early days the right to take refuge in a Christian Church was recognized both by Church and State. The first Christian emperors granted this privilege with the clear understanding that it was not to be used to frustrate the ends of justice by sheltering hardened offenders and systematic criminals, but to afford a refuge to the innocent,

the weak, and the misunderstood. Abuses soon sprang up, however, even the worst criminals received protection, and the right of sanctuary was abolished, except in a few churches.

The idea gained a strong hold upon the popular mind, which is illustrated from more standpoints than one by the case of Guntramn, king of the Franks, in 561, who thought when he entered the Church at Arles that he required no guard of soldiers. Yet when he was attacked by an assassin, it was considered to be sacrilege to put to death even the man who attempted the murder, because he had been dragged from the Church.

The privilege belonged to many Churches in England, notably Westminster Abbey and Beverley Minster. The sanctuary knocker is still shown at Durham Cathedral. At Beverley Minster, one of the most interesting objects is the ancient "Frith Stol" (Stool of Peace), which bears every evidence of very great antiquity. It is probably older than any portion of the Minster. In A.D. 938, when Athelstane was returning from his great victory over the Scots, he gave Beverley Minster the right of sanctuary. Sanctuary extended in the old days for over a mile each way from the Church, and crosses were put up to mark the boundaries which remained until modern times. But the "Frith Stol" was the most sacred spot of all.

Whoever attempted to drag a fugitive from this sacred seat, however guilty he might seem to be, was held to be committing a sacrilege, from which no mere money payment could ever free him.

Tradition says that Sebert, the first Christian king of Essex (A.D. 604), conferred the peculiar right of sanctuary upon the Church at Westminster. Dean Stanley shows that the immunity given was much abused, and says that "the precincts of the Abbey were a vast cave of Adullam for all the distressed and discontented in the metropolis who desired, according to the phrase of the time, to take Westminster." But it was not without its good uses. Innocence often found a refuge from wrong. The queen of Edward IV. fled to Westminster, in her distress; and within the walls of that Sanctuary, Edward V. first saw the light. And such was the feeling of awe towards it that the base designs of Richard III. were long kept in check, because the young Duke of York was kept in sanctuary by his mother at Westminster, of which the Queen said, "I reckon him secure . . . in this Sanctuary, whereof was there never yet tyrant so devilish that durst presume to break."

Jesus Christ is the true *Sanctuary*. He fulfils all that the city of refuge suggested. He is our Kedesh, our place of refuge, our sanctuary, our sacred place. His name is Saviour, and He is

mighty to save. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. xviii. 10).

The altar was the meeting place between God and the transgressor, where the innocent victim was offered in the place of the guilty sinner. So Christ is the true altar, the meeting place between God and man, the one and only Priest, the one and only sacrifice, the one and only atonement for sin. Then again the horns of the altar were symbols of mercy and grace, freely offered and freely given by God. They told of hope and of safety. To grasp the altar horns was to lay hold of God's strength and to rest under the shadow of His protecting love. So Christ is at once our shelter and our strength. He surrounds the believer as with a temple wall, keeps him in safety from all enemies and in peace amidst all alarms.

There is a story of the Highlands of Scotland which has been told many times to illustrate Highland honour. It is connected with the clan Macgregor, of famous memory. It seems that a son of the great chieftain was killed in a fight in an inn on the moors of Glenorchy. The man-slayer, a young man named Lamont, fled for his life from the angry clansmen, and mounting his horse, galloped in the darkness of the night at full speed until he reached a house in which he sought a refuge from his pursuers. It happened

to be the house of the chieftain himself, who possessed such "wondrous length and strength of arm." "Save my life," the fugitive cried, "for men are after me to take it away." "Whoever you are," said Macgregor, "while you are under my roof you are safe." The words were no sooner said than the pursuers were at the gate, thundering for admittance. They called loudly, "Has a stranger just entered the house?" "He has," said the chief. "And what may be your business with him?" "He has slain your son," was the quick reply. "Give him up to us for vengeance." The sad and terrible news filled the house with weeping and lamentation, the great chieftain was broken-hearted, his eyes streamed with tears, he could hardly speak through his sobs, anger and sorrow fought against truth and honour in his breast, but the right triumphed, and he said, "No; you cannot have the youth, for he has Macgregor's word for his safety, and as God lives, while he is in my house, he shall stay secure." It was a noble sentiment, from a heart of stainless honour, and we need not wonder at the faith which animated the Clan in their gatherings, under every form of proscription:—

"While there's leaves on the forest, or foam on the river,
Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever."

The story is a reflection of the love of Christ, as shown in a wild highland chief, for the

Lord Jesus long centuries before had given His own gracious promise, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." And God, whom He came to reveal, was shown to be a God of love, the protector of all that trust in Him, our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. "They shall never perish," was His encouraging word, "and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

The temple was God's sanctuary of old. It represented God dwelling in the midst of Israel, and Israel drawing near to God in the appointed way. Christ is the true sanctuary. His Manhood, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (*ἐσκήνωσεν* tabernacled) among us," is the "tabernacle of meeting" between man and God. His glorified body passed into the holiest place, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. It is in Christ that God dwells with us, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), and it is through our abiding in Him and He in us, that God dwells with us and in us and is our sanctuary, and in Whom we have grace, blessing, and peace.

Kedesh, the city of the holy place of the sanctuary, points to Jesus the holy one of God, who is our one and only Refuge, the strong tower of the Lord in which we are safe for time and for eternity. Happy he who in trusting faith looks to Jesus as a refuge. It is related of that master-

mind of the English Church, the great Christian apologist, Bishop Butler, that as he was on his death-bed he said to his chaplain, "I know that Jesus Christ is a Saviour but how am I to know that He is a Saviour to *me*?" The chaplain simply answered, "My Lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' " The dying Bishop was lost in thought for a few minutes, but into his heart there came that blessed assurance which is the fruit of accepting Jesus as a personal Saviour; then he said, "I have often read and thought of that scripture, but never till this moment did I feel its full power, and now I die happy."

Jesus Christ our Strength

“ How grew its shadowing pile at length
A symbol in the Hebrew tongue,
Of God’s eternal love and strength ? ”

J. G. Whittier.

“ Only when thine arm
In sense of weakness reaches forth to God,
Wilt thou be strong to suffer and to do.”

Dean Plumptre.

“ Man’s wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone ;
And even an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own.”

Wm. Cowper

“ I have no help but Thine, nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon.
It is enough, my Lord ! enough indeed ;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.”

Horatius Bonar.

“ *Sin*, Thou hast blotted out, and Thou
Our ‘ *Kedesh* ’ City art ;
Our ‘ *Shechem* ’ too, Thou bearest us,
The ‘ signet ’ on Thine heart.”

J. E. J.

2. Shechem

THE second city of refuge was Shechem, the Neapolis of the Romans, the modern Nablûs. It was situated in the hill country of Ephraim, and occupied a splendid site of great natural beauty. It has been called the paradise of Palestine, the enchanted fairyland. Gerizim, the mount of blessing, and Ebal, the mount of cursing, protected it on either side, and at the base of each were not more than 500 yards apart. These two mountains lift their heads 800 feet above the valley, and 2,500 feet above the Mediterranean. The valley itself possesses a rich soil composed of black vegetable mould, and is well watered throughout. It is filled with fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, and oliveyards.

Shechem is rich in historical associations, and consecrated by many precious memories. Its name is familiar to every attentive reader of Scripture. It is also known as Sychem and some authorities think as Sychar. It was at Shechem that God first appeared unto Abraham, the great father of the faithful,

on his entrance into the Holy Land (Gen. xii. 6). It was at Shechem that Jacob cleared his house of idols, and buried the images and amulets under Abraham's oak. Jotham's parable was spoken at Shechem, finding a natural setting in the trees which flourished in the neighbourhood. There Abraham built an altar. There Jacob re-entered the promised land and built an altar for worship which he called El-Elohe-Israel, God the God of Israel. Jacob's well was there. There Joseph was buried when the Israelites took possession of Caanan. There Joshua read "the words of the law, the blessing, and the curse," as all Israel stood "half in front of Mount Gerizim and half in front of Mount Ebal." There Jesus taught the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well the great lesson concerning the Water of Life, and pointed His disciples to the vast spiritual harvest field of the world.

Shechem was the chief city of Ephraim, and on the division of the kingdom at Solomon's death Jeroboam made it the capital of the northern kingdom. It became the centre of the religious system of the Samaritans as Jerusalem was of the Jews, and the civil capital of Samaria.

Shechem still retains something of its ancient importance, and is now the seat of government of the Province, "and eloquent homage to its immemorial rank—it is the connecting link of the

telegraphic systems of the east and the west of the Jordan."

There is a special interest in the meaning of Shechem. According to Fürst שָׁכַם *Shakham*, the verb means: To bend, incline oneself in the neck and back, to be bent, said of a shoulder bearing a burden, to load upon camels or beasts of burden for the commencement of a journey; and שֶׁכֶם *Shechem* the noun means: the back which is inclined for carrying a burden. The Oxford Gesenius states that the root meaning of the verb is unknown. The Ethiopic has a denominative signifying to carry on the shoulder. In the Hiphil species in Hebrew, the verb is used to signify to start, rise early, load beasts of burden for a journey; the noun signifies shoulder, probably the shoulder (saddle) of a mountain.

The Hebrew word may well be taken to mean a *shoulder*, or more properly, the upper part of the back just below the neck. The shoulder represents and is a natural symbol of strength. It is used of willingness to help or sustain, as for instance the shouldering of responsibility. It has the thought of support, that upon which something is laid, or which holds it up. We speak of "putting one's shoulder to the wheel," when we think of help that will prove really effective and lead to the overcoming of the difficulty. We say "shoulder to shoulder" when we wish to convey

the thought of united action and of mutual co-operation in any work.

The spiritual lessons are many and important.

The names of Israel's twelve tribes were carried on the high priest's shoulders. "Thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel," "and thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial" (Ex. xxviii. 9, 12).

This was a great object lesson in spiritual things. It signified that the fearful burden of the sins and sorrows of God's people was all borne in before the Lord. It also suggested that the names were presented before the Lord to be kept ever in the divine remembrance.

And so it is that Christ, our great High Priest, He who has all power in heaven and earth, bears ever upon His shoulders in the heavenly temple the precious jewels of His glorious salvation, and keeps before His Father's eye the names of His people. Not one name is wanting, "He calleth His own sheep by name," not one is forgotten, "I know mine own."

"Those characters shall fair abide,
Our everlasting trust,
When gems, and monuments, and crowns
Are mouldered down to dust."

Jesus Christ is the great *Burden-bearer*. He bears the weight of our sin and of our sorrow. He is the great spiritual Samson. Upon the cross He bore the burden of the world's guilt. The sins of mankind according to the word of promise, "He shall bear their iniquities," were laid upon Him. He was the very paschal Lamb which "taketh away," or "beareth," as it is in the margin, the sin of the whole world. And it was by "taking upon Himself our infirmities," that Christ took them away.

He bears the burden of our earthly load of sorrow and of trouble, of trial and of loss. We are taught to cast all our care upon Him for He careth for us, to hurl, as the strong word might be translated, it is far more energetic than "laying," our burden upon the Lord, for He is ready to sustain us. And we know that His promises are ever sure.

One, who ascended the Righi, gained a great spiritual blessing from the guide, in the lesson which he taught along the line of duty. The first thing that he did in the ascent was to ask for all outside wraps, and to place them most carefully, when bound together, on his shoulders. But the climber kept a number back. They were soon found, however, to be a hindrance to freedom of movement, if not indeed a danger. But still they were clung to, until while resting for a moment, the guide most respectfully, but none

the less firmly, required that everything should be given up, but the alpenstock. He then put all with the greatest care upon his shoulders and led the way. There was not only the possibility of double speed, but there was as well double safety. It all came like a flash of light, the folly of it, the wilfulness of it, not to follow Jesus implicitly, to cast all upon Him, just to take Him as Guide and to trust Him fully.

“Cast care aside, lean on Thy Guide ;
His boundless mercy will provide.”

Christ is the *strength* of His people. He is our “Shechem,” our strength. The shoulder is fitted for the burden, and Christ answers every need of man’s being. His grace is sufficient for us and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. He gives strength for the day and to meet the varied needs of man’s changing life.

“His faithful word declares to thee,
That ‘as thy day strength shall be.’”

“He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.”

The Christian believer, while he may be called to bear his cross, to meet the trials of life, to face the dark day of sorrow and bitter loss, yet whatever the difficulty, whatever the struggle, there is given unto him grace for every time of need, and a supply of strength, as the occasion may require.

“He has engaged, by firm decree,
That ‘as thy days thy strength shall be.’”

The blessed secret of this strength is the life of constant faith in the Lord Jesus, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the heart. And so the apostle writes, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” It is not in ourselves, but in Christ, Who said, “without Me ye can do nothing.” But in Christ we can do all things, there is nothing impossible to the life which is linked by faith in Christ to God. And so St. Paul in triumphant faith could declare, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” He is not afraid to say, for it is the language of humility, as well as of faith, I can do all things, “in Him Who giveth me power.” It is because of the vital union between the believer and the Saviour, a union which would hardly seem possible to us, and be beyond our dreams, if God had not revealed it in the most positive way, the union of our life with the life of Christ, He in us and we in Him, that this strength is irresistible.

Jesus Christ is our “Shechem” in that the government is upon His shoulder. So Isaiah declared “The government shall be upon His shoulder.” It was the custom to wear the ensign of office upon the shoulder, the idea behind the practice being that the government was being held up or sustained. So it was foretold of Jesus, “And the

key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder." The two primary needs of man's soul are forgiveness of sins, and strength to live a new life. These Christ alone supplies. He is our strength, in that He is omnipotent power, and united to Him by faith we draw from that rich supply according to our need.

Jesus Christ our Friend

“My only refuge is Thy grace.”

Isaac Watts

“There is a spot where spirits blend,
And friend holds fellowship with friend.”

Hugh Stowell.

“’Tis only in Thee hiding,
I feel my life secure ;
Only in Thee abiding,
The conflict can endure.”

J. G. Deck.

“No longer outcasts from our home,
We now in ‘Hebron’ dwell ;
In ‘fellowship’ with God and Thee,
And joy unspeakable.”

J. E. J.

“Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of Thy grace,
The same in ev’ry age.
O grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light vouchsaf’d to me.”

William Cowper.

“We most humbly beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, so
to assist us with Thy grace, that we may continue in that
holy fellowship.—*Post Communion Prayer.*

3. Hebron

THE ancient and picturesque city of Hebron was also chosen as a City of Refuge. It rivalled even Damascus itself in its antiquity, and was said to have been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Numbers xiii. 22). Zoan, once the pride of Egypt, the royal city boasted an earlier origin than any place in that ancient land. And Knobel thought that Hebron and Zoan had probably a common founder, perhaps one of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, possibly the Anakim of the Scripture story.

It is known in history, also as Kirjath-Arba, "the City of Arba," a mighty man of valour amongst the warlike Anakim, justly celebrated for his great stature and Herculean strength. Hebron became a part of the inheritance of Caleb at the conquest, and was then given, or had restored to it, its true name: Hebron, company, fellowship, friendship. The ancient and truly significant designation has been altered by the changing conditions of the place, but the old

meaning, though in another tongue, remains, for it is still called el Khalil, "The Friend."

Hebron was the early home of Abraham, the "Friend of God," when, after his separation from Lot, he received from God a direct grant of the gracious land of Palestine. It was at Hebron that the heavenly visitants brought the glad tidings of the birth of a son ; there Abraham erected an altar for the worship of God ; and it became consecrated soil, the cemetery or sleeping place of the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; and of Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah as well.

It was fitting, with such associations, that David should fix upon Hebron as his royal city. Indeed, it was by divine direction, for when David "enquired of the Lord " "Whither shall I go up?" God said "Unto Hebron."

The sacred associations (however perverted) still cling about the place, for the Mohammedans esteem it one of the four holiest sanctuaries of the world. The cave Machpelah, which contains the sacred dust of the Father of the Faithful, of the spiritual fathers and mothers of Israel, and as some have believed that of Adam himself, has not been entered for some six centuries or more. The mosque which stands upon the site, probably an early Christian church, is even more jealously guarded than the mosque of Omar at Jerusalem. For many centuries it was most carefully kept from the "infidel" gaze of Christians and Jews. An

Italian once entered the mosque in disguise, and Ali Bey, a Spanish renegade, was allowed to join with Moslem worshippers, while in modern times Pierotti, as government engineer, was allowed to examine the building. King Edward the Seventh, when travelling as Prince of Wales, was given free access to the mosque in 1862, accompanied by his suite, of which Dean Stanley was a member, but the sacred cave was most rigorously kept from any supposed profanation.

The name Hebron, as we study its origin, suggests a most beautiful meaning.

Fürst tells us that **חִבְר** the verb *Hhabhar* means: To be strung together, to be bound, to be associated, to unite; and that the noun **חִבְרוֹן** *Hebhron* signifies: A city, from the idea of joining, association. The Oxford Gesenius says that the root meaning of *Hhabar* is to unite, to bind, to be joined, and that *Hebron* means association, league, etc.

Dr. Young gives its meaning as "Company." Dr. Adam Clarke translates it quite freely as fellowship, friendly association. Canon Faussett tells us that Hebron means fellowship; and the Mohammedans most suggestively name the modern Hebron Beit el-Khalil, that is, the house of the Friend (of God).

Whichever meaning be taken, the name is fragrant with lessons concerning Christ, Who in Himself fulfils, and far more than fulfils, all that

Hebron the City of Refuge meant in old time. In the quaint and strikingly beautiful words of John Mason :—

“Christ is my Father and my Friend,
My Brother and my Love,
My Head, my Hope, my Counsellor,
My Advocate above.”

And as language failed the poet to express all that Christ is to His believing people, he thus broke forth :—

“My Christ, what shall I call ?
My Christ is First, my Christ is last,
My Christ is All in All.”

Jesus Christ is indeed our Hebron.

Is He not the secret of our Fellowship with God? The leading principle of the mighty plan of Salvation is that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. He is then the medium of fellowship with God. Now fellowship is a tremendous privilege. It is an Icelandic word which conveys the idea of partnership, or community of interest, literally “a laying together of property,” or “a money partnership.” We are, as Adam Clarke wisely puts it, joined with God in “friendly association.”

And it is through Christ that we have fellowship one with another. He is the true bond of union between man and man, in Christian brotherhood. It is through Him, as we are united to Him by faith, that we are able to say, “I believe in the

Communion of Saints." He is the centre, and as the spokes of a wheel draw nearer together as they approach the hub, so Christians enter into closer bonds of union as they draw near to Christ.

Jesus Christ is indeed our Hebron.

He is "The Friend."

Jesus is the Friend of Sinners. The proof of His friendship is in the love with which He loves them, is in His great love-quest, as he seeks to save the lost and wandering sons of men, and lead them home to God.

Jesus Christ is the Friend of the Sorrowing and the Suffering. "There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." It is in the hour of trial and of bitter loss that friendship is most precious, and it is then that Jesus shows how real and how true is His friendship for His people. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." If Seneca could tell the courtier in Rome who had lost his son that he had no cause to mourn, either for that or ought else, since Cæsar was his friend, what comfort to the Christian to know that there is no person, and no power, in all the universe of being able to separate him from the love of Christ.

Jesus Christ leads His people into the fulness of His Friendship. Aristotle defined friendship as the existence of two souls in one body. Christ made it by His Spirit an abiding life: "Abide in Me, and I in you." It is not only intimacy but

nearness, not only nearness but identity: one thought, one heart, one life. The friendship of Jesus is friendship indeed. It is marked everywhere by its intense reality. It knows no change. There is in it the spirit of undying constancy. He is a faithful friend. What a contrast to the attitude of Jesus Christ is that illustrated by the saying of Horace Walpole, "If one of my friends happens to die, I drive down to St. James' Coffee House and bring home a new one." The friendship of Jesus is perennial, it never dies, it is proof against all the shocks of time, against all the varying vicissitudes of human life, against every impairing and impeding influence which may stand in the way of its exercise. It has been asserted of radium, that it is "immutable among mutable things." This statement may be affirmed absolutely of the friendship of Jesus, for it is eternal like the life of God.

In all ages men have admired, and praised, and treasured friendship. It is the most beautiful and fragrant flower that man meets in his earthly pilgrimage. Is it any wonder that he seeks it and prizes it, and wears it upon his heart? It brightens and refreshes his life. Our Shakespeare has enshrined for us in noble lines the thought of its preciousness:—

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

The poet thought only of human friendship,

but Jesus is both human and divine. And He offers us the fulness of His great heart of love. He tenders you His friendship, He invites your trust, He desires your love. He thus becomes your "Hebron," in whose undying friendship you may trust both for time and for eternity.

The fellowship of Christ is a glorious privilege to the Christian who rests in Christ, the refuge of his soul. It is the communication to his heart-life of all the rich treasures of blessing which the Son has in the Father, for truly, "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." It is heart to heart converse, the concord of the mind brought into harmony with the Divine. It is a partnership, for the thought is most practical, a sharing of the things of God with His believing child, a unity of thought and action. It is the privilege of access to God, and the throne of His grace, a sanctified intercourse with the Father of our spirits, and an abundant entrance into all the blessings of His love.

The Christian believer "in Christ" has direct and immediate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ through faith; and as he walks "in the light" he has fellowship with his fellow-Christians, through Christ who unites him with all that are in Christ Jesus. Christians are thus drawn in closer bonds of fellowship, and loving Christ they love one another; while fellowship with the Father is through Christ

alone, Who said "I am the Way; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

It is a fellowship of life, a vital union, an abiding and eternal life, which is only to be found in Christ, Who is the Life. The Cities of Refuge were a striking emblem of the safety of one who, convinced of sin, fled to the only One Who could save and help. Believing he has life, and he lives the life of faith. It is a present fact, and an eternal possession. It belongs not only pre-eminently, but exclusively, to Christ; "this life is in His Son." And the life that Christ gives He guards unto eternity, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

This life must be fed, for life calls for nourishment, and nothing short of divine food can satisfy the longing of the soul. The Bread of Heaven alone can meet the immortal need, the Water of Life alone refresh, for it is

"A thirst no earthly stream could satisfy—
A hunger that must feed on Christ or die."

It was a divine provision that in the Cities of Refuge the necessities of life should be kept at all times. Food and water were to be on hand, at whatever cost. In Christ there is life, "He that hath the Son hath life," and it is Christ Who sustains the life He gives. "I am," said the Lord Jesus, "the Bread of Life." Bread is in itself a perfect symbol of the food essential to

the nourishment and preservation of physical life. It suits all conditions and all constitutions, from youth to old age. And the fruit of the vine is the natural symbol of refreshment.

Christ is indeed our Hebron. In Him we have fellowship divine. In the sacred feast which Jesus makes, we have a Holy Communion. It is the Lord's Supper, in which the Bread is the bread of the Covenant, and in all ages to partake of one's table, and to eat of one's bread has been a sign and seal of friendship and of fellowship. The Cup, as the Lord Jesus declared, is the New Covenant in His blood. It is the cup of blessing, containing as it does the covenant-wine, which speaks louder than trumpet tongue of "the blood of the everlasting covenant," the blood by which He has made peace upon the cross, the blood by which we have access, and enter into fellowship with the Father, "in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The Holy Communion is a veritable means of fellowship, by which the memory of the loving Saviour is kept green in our hearts, the flame of love to Him is kept burning brightly in our lives, the memory of His Divine Person is ever renewed in our minds, and the spirit of trust is constantly increased and strengthened in Christ Himself. And as we approach the Sacrament of His love, in simple faith, believing His Word, and trusting

Him fully, our souls are nourished and refreshed by His most precious Body and Blood, we spiritually feed upon Him, and receive in the hand of faith, the spiritual food, the living and true Bread, and the spiritual refreshment, which the true Vine alone can supply, so that in our heart of hearts “we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.”

Jesus Christ our Fortress

“Who trusts in God’s unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that naught can move.”
George Neumark,

“The race is run, the fight is fought,
All the pilgrims’ cares are dreams,
When that dawn of morning gleams.”
Klopstock’s Morgenlied.

“The only sure foundation Thou,
The only ‘Fortress’ made
Invincible to hostile powers ;
The only *Sun and Shade*.”
“Safe within ‘*Bezer*’s’ lofty towers,
We can look down and smile
Upon the dangers and the griefs
Which seemed so dread erewhile.”

J.E.J.

4. Bezer.

THE message of the Gospel and its comforting truths, as we have already seen, were wonderfully foreshadowed in the Cities of Refuge. They show forth Christ, in His great redeeming work of love for the souls of men. They illustrate especially the way of life. They were types of Christ, and their names express some particular attribute or office of the Divine Redeemer. In Kedesh we find in Him as the holy one a Sanctuary, in Shechem the shoulder, the "secret of spiritual Strength," in Hebron our Friend, "who sticketh closer than a brother," and who gives us Fellowship with God and man.

It was necessary, on account of the natural division of the Holy Land by the Jordan, that provision should be made on both sides of the river, so that no Israelite who sought a refuge should be at a disadvantage in the race for safety and protection. Three cities were therefore appointed, "on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward." The first of these was Bezer. It is mentioned,

Driver remarks, on the Moabite Stone, as one of the cities rebuilt by Mesha.

Bezer stood in the wilderness in the plain country or table land, but has not been identified with certainty in the present day. It was a Reubenite city allotted to the family of Merari, one of the progenitors of the three great families of the Levites, consecrated to the service of God, and who bore the heaviest burden in connection with the removal of the tabernacle throughout all the wanderings of the Children of Israel. It was situated on the smooth downs of Moab east of the Jordan.

The name Bezer is full of meaning, and strikingly suggestive. Fürst notes that the verb **בָּצַר** *Batsar* means: To gather grapes, to lessen, shorten, to cut off from something, to separate, to fortify as of walls; while the noun **בֵּצֶר** *Bětser* means: Place of ore, gold, silver broken out of the mine; strong place. God is a fortress. The Oxford Gesenius says that the verb means to cut off, make inaccessible especially by fortifying, enclose; the noun denoting a fortress, and possibly precious ore, from the idea of separation.

The meaning of the name is thus variously given. The generally accepted interpretation is Strong, a fortification and therefore a stronghold, a fortress, taking the meaning to enclose, encompass with a wall, and arising from this, a fortified place, and hence goods or treasure

thus secured from injury. But it may mean also gold earth, fair ore or gold ore.

If we take the meaning of *stronghold* it conveys the thought of a fastness, a place of security from enemies. If we take *fortress* it suggests a strongly fortified place of some considerable extent. Its leading thought is a place of safety from foes who may wish to injure or to destroy us, a place of security in the day of conflict, the hour of trouble. Its meaning would come with power to a people who had been engaged in a long warfare, or who were beset with foes on every side. A fortress was to them a necessity without which there could be no feeling of security, no hope of safety. It was specially necessary where the weak were called upon to resist the strong.

The art of fortification goes back to the earliest history of our race. It grew out of the necessity of the case, the need of mutual help and protection drew men together into one place, and it became necessary to study self-defence for their families and for their property against sudden attacks from their enemies. It was essential that in times of war there should be a sufficient food supply, carefully guarded against attack. In early days a single wall was sufficient, and walls were, as a rule, made of brick. The walls of cities were soon, however, made very strong and permanent. The walls of Babylon were sixty miles in extent. Herodotus, who personally

visited Babylon, declares that the walls were eighty-seven feet in breadth and three hundred and fifty feet in height. The defences of Jerusalem, though different in character from Babylon, were none the less effective. It is related that in the great siege by Vespasian, all the Roman battering rams and other engines of destruction only succeeded in one night in disengaging four stones from the masonry in the tower of Antonia.

The main object of a fortress is to provide a defence for the weak against the strong. The aim is to render a place secure against the attacks of an enemy. It is man's work, though man often but makes use of the natural advantages of a position as it came from the hands of the Creator. The words fortify, fortress, fort, are all derived from *fortis*, strong, and the idea is that additional strength is given in warfare to one party over another. The Duke of Wellington was a master of the science of fortification, and made free and full use of the art of the engineer. He saw that an army entrenched or fortified in the field possesses almost the same advantages as if it were in a fortress. The lines of Torres Vedras, covering fifty miles and containing fifty forts, which held in check a powerful French army under Massena, and which saved Portugal, were planned by Wellington, and were, perhaps, the most remarkable line of defence ever constructed.

Jesus Christ is our spiritual *Fortress*.

It is a happy personal experience to realize in any sense what a great mercy even temporal safety is. But what a tremendous privilege is spiritual safety. Dr. R. W. Dale, who was such a great intellectual and spiritual force in English non-conformity, wrote to his brother on his fortieth birthday: "It is a great thing to have forty years behind you without any great catastrophe and shame. The ice cracks in such unexpected places—the ship is so apt to strike on rocks where the chart gave no warning of them—that mere safety seems to me a much greater reason for thankfulness than it used to be."

In Christ we are safe from every enemy. In Him alone there is ample security for time and for eternity. In the world of sense there may or there may not be, safety in material things, from an enemy in a fortress, from the rifle shot behind the earth work; but in the spiritual world safety is *only* to be found in a person, Who is Jesus Christ. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

In Him alone there is security against sin, its fatal power, its evil influence, its terrible inroads, its awful punishment. His name is Saviour, and He is mighty to save.

In Him alone there is safety from the attacks of Satan, from the darts of temptation which he flings against the soul, from every wicked purpose

of the evil one. He protects all who trust in Him. "The Lord Himself is thy keeper." "O my dove thou art in the clefts of the rock."

In Him alone there is help in the day of trouble, for He is the Saviour of the soul, who offers rest and peace to all who put their trust in Him.

As Luther magnificently says in his noble hymn, the great German war song, the Marseillaise, as Heine calls it, of the Reformation:—

"A fortress sure is God our King,
A shield that n'er shall fail us;
His sword alone shall succour bring
When evil doth assail us."

The poet's mind runs from one image to another in the lines. For words fail to express adequately all that God really is as a Saviour of His people. And as he thinks of Satan's craft and cruel hate, an invisible enemy armed with deadly power, seeking whom he may devour, Luther quickly passes from the figure of a fortress, and pictures a champion sent of God, the sinner to deliver.

"And dost thou ask His name?
'Tis Jesus Christ—the same
Of Sabaoth the Lord,
The everlasting Word,
'Tis He must win the battle."

Jesus Christ is our *Stronghold*. The stronghold differs from the fortress in that it is often framed by nature without the aid of man's art. Jesus Christ is ever our Rock of Defence, our sure refuge against every form of evil. He is the Rock of

Ages "cleft to be a refuge " for the sinner against the enemies of his soul, smitten to furnish the river of the water of life, a protecting shade against the fierce blast of sin, a hiding place from the wind of temptation, a covert from every tempest of evil that may beat against the soul of man.

He is our "Tower of Salvation," so high as to be out of the reach of all dangers which fill us with dread and nameless terror.

In that "Tower " there is safety for the sons of men. The salvation which Christ has provided is a wall about His people which no ladder can scale, which cannot be battered down by the engines of war, which cannot be undermined or destroyed. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." "Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy." "The Lord is my rock and my fortress."

If we take "Bezer " to mean "gold ore," as Dr. Patrick Fairbairn suggests, it adds even more to its deep spiritual significance. For gold is ever the great sinew of war. And while gold in Scripture is symbolic of many different things, it is peculiarly adapted to show forth the inestimable value of the grace of Christ, which alone is true spiritual wealth. "I counsel thee," said the Lord Jesus, "to buy of Me gold tried in the fire,

that thou mayest be rich." And when faith acquires, or rather appropriates the riches of Christ, without money and without price, the figure passes to the child of God. "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold."

Christ then fulfils all that Bezer stood for as a City of Refuge.

And we may well say that as gold is above all other metals so Christ is above all, is "All in All." He is the Pearl of priceless worth, the Christian's true and only real wealth. He possesses all the riches of God, for it is written as one of God's greatest promises. "How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." In Christ we have all the wealth of God, in Him all fulness dwells, and as St. Paul declares, "Ye are complete in Him," as Dean Alford renders it: "Ye are filled full in Christ," or as Bishop Lightfoot translates it, "And ye are in Him being fulfilled." For true life consists in union with Him, and of His fulness all His people receive, drawing from Him all the riches of His grace to meet their spiritual need, for in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. John Newton, in one of his finest hymns—one of the most beautiful in the English language—combines the thoughts which cluster around Bezer: Jesus our

Fortress, in Whom is treasured all the riches of
God :—

“Dear Name the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place,
My never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.”

Jesus Christ our Heavenly
Home

"So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a stedfast eye."
Wm. Cowper.

"Oh let Thy hand support me still,
And lead me to Thy holy hill." *Zinzendorf.*

"Go up, go up, my heart,
Dwell with thy God above ;
For here thou canst not rest,
Nor here give out thy love."
Horatius Bonar.

"Though the Earth dispart these Earthlies, face from face,
Yet the Heavenlies shall surely join in Heaven,
For the spirit hath no bonds in time or space." *Lytton.*

"Thou Who wast Centre of all heights on the Mount of
Beatitudes,
Grant us to sit with Thee in heavenly places."
Christina G. Rossetti.

"And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see,
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"
Tennyson.

"In sight the gates of 'Ramoath' stand,
Erst opened to our King ;
And soon within their shining walls,
His ransomed hosts He'll bring." *J.E.J.*

"To Pisgah's top I fly,
And there delighted stand,
To view beyond a shining sky,
The spacious promised land."

"The Lord of all the vast domain,
Has promis'd it to me ;
The length and breadth of all the plain,
As far as faith can see." *Wm. Cowper.*

"For thou canst not rest until thou attain the highest
good, and find out the ultimate end ; which being recognized
and found, Thy restlessness shall cease."
Thomas A. Kempis.

5. Ramoth

RAMOTH in Gilead was a strong City of Refuge. It was a fortress of considerable natural strength, the key of eastern Palestine commanding Gilead, celebrated from the earliest days for its aromatic spices and balm.

Ramoth was situated in the territory of Gad, and was therefore held by the Gadites, famous soldiers of old time, "men of might and of war, fit for the battle." Their "faces were the faces of lions," and they were "as swift as the roes upon the mountains," "one of the least was a match for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand."

They were evidently a bold, courageous, and warlike people, constantly fulfilling the prophetic words of Moses: "He dwelleth as a lion." But, strong as they were, they remembered that the battle is the Lord's, and of one of their most famous victories it is said that they triumphed "because they put their trust in Him." The nature of the people, the conditions of the country

demanded a strong city of Refuge. And this Ramoth was in every sense.

The name Ramoth is suggestive of spiritual lessons of the greatest significance to the Christian. Fürst says that the word is from רום *rúm*, or ראם *ra'am*, to be high ; and that ראמות *ramoth*, the plural noun, means Heights. The Oxford Gesenius says the verb signifies to be high, exalted ; the noun naturally signifying Heights.

Ramoth, then, means "heights," and, like its kindred cities, indicates the most ample and perfect security. It is from a word which means, to be raised, made high, or exalted, and hence eminence. It conveys the idea of "high places," a thought which finds its truest expression in the great term of St. Paul, "the heavenly places," or "the heavenlies."

Jesus Christ is the true Ramoth.

In Christ we find a place of perfect safety, for He is the citadel of the soul. In Christ we find abundant provision for our every need, for in Him all fulness dwells. In Christ we find that we enjoy every spiritual privilege, for the Divine Father "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

Jesus Christ is our Ramoth.

St. Peter declared "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." He is the Prince of Glory, Who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we

through His poverty might become rich, Who being originally in the form of God, emptied Himself, and being made in the likeness of men, humbled himself unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and made Him Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, with all power in heaven and earth. He is the Saviour of the world. The Son of Man came "to seek and to save that which was lost." This was His holy mission, His great love-quest. And now He is able, as the Saviour-Prince, to save to the uttermost all them that come to God through Him.

The believing sinner, with the burden of his guilt upon him, finds a refuge in Christ at Mount Calvary, enters into the fulness of the new life at Mount Olivet, and is exalted with Christ to the heavenlies. So St. Paul declares: "God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 5 R.V.)

There is a most real union between Christ and Christians. It is nothing short of a vital union. It has been compared by the Lord Jesus Himself to the union which we find in nature, between the vine and the vine branches. St. Paul likened it to the unity of the human body, especially indi-

cating the vital connection which there is between the head and the members. There is, therefore, the closest relationship between Christ and His people. Christ is in heaven as our great Head, as our representative. Bishop Christopher Wordsworth has well expressed the Christian's privilege in these words:—

“Thou hast raised our human nature in the clouds to
God's right hand,
There we sit in heavenly places, there with Thee in glory
stand.”

The Christian's position with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies is one of rich and precious privilege. The believer's citizenship is in heaven, as the apostle declares, he now possesses his constitutional rights, it is his country, the Commonwealth to which he belongs by right. We have the same thought in the words “I was born an Englishman,” conveying with it all the rights of citizenship, its privileges and powers in the British empire.

The Christian in the person of his great Head, Jesus Christ, has already entered the City of God, the only city which is the eternal City. His name is already enrolled there. He enjoys all its privileges and immunities, his safety is provided for, every possible good for time and for eternity is his, and while he is upon his earthly pilgrimage the Lord Himself is his keeper, and an innumerable company of angels clothed with

strength incorruptible guard his every footstep, while His loving Father graciously supplies his every need.

The Christian's position in regard to "the heavenlies" is not some beautiful theory of life which charms the imagination and dazzles the fancy, but which has no foundation in sober fact. St. Paul's teaching is clear as the day. The believer is in the heavenly places by point of right, based on his relationship to Christ; in a spiritual sense it is true virtually in spirit in the present time of his earthly life, but looking for a future reality of a presence which shall cover his whole personality.

The Christian's Home is there, Heaven is His Home.

The promise of Christ puts this beyond all question. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." It is the blessed home, where those who are "accepted in the beloved" will enter into the perfect felicity of His chosen. It is our Father's House, into which we enter as His dear children, and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," possessing through His wondrous grace the fulness of the glory. "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them."

The Christian's life centres in "the Heavenlies,"

He has risen with Christ, and ascended in spirit, so that he sits with Christ on high, finds his home with God, sets his aims and affections heavenward, sees the full fruition of his hopes all culminating there, places his dearest treasures in that safe stronghold, and remembers that it is his sure, and certain, and indisputable inheritance.

The believer's privileges in the Heavenlies have been the subject of much meditation and thought in all the ages of Christian experience. John Bunyan, the ingenious and immortal dreamer, has given us two pictures of the blessed state of which the Apostle writes.

The first is the view of the Delectable Mountains. These mountains are Emmanuel's Land.

Christian and Hopeful went up into the mountains, after their merciful deliverance from Doubting Castle and Giant Despair. They found Emmanuel's Land to be a delightful place. The gracious shepherds of the Lord of the mountains invited them to solace themselves with the good of the Delectable mountains. They looked with delight upon the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of waters, finding everywhere refreshment and renewal of strength. But, best of all, from Emmanuel's Land the City of God can be seen. Through the "perspective glass" of faith the gates of the Celestial City can be discerned.

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“ My Father’s house on high,
Home of my soul, how near
At times to faith’s foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear ! ”

The place is one of privilege, and of glorious anticipation of the perfect happiness that awaits the believer in the more immediate presence of the Lord.

The second picture of present blessedness is the entrance into the “ country of Beulah.”

In that dear Beulah Land Christian and Hopeful found that they were not only within sight of heaven, but within its very borders. “ In this land the shining ones commonly walked.” The air was very sweet and pleasant, the birds sang constantly, the flowers bloomed every day, indeed there was no night, for the sun shone always, and ever in their ears there rang out the songs of the redeemed. There was a new joy in their hearts which they had never known before. It is but a step to the Heaven of unspeakable joy. True the river had to be crossed, but that is bridged with Promise. In Beulah Land, where the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, the land of marriage, the Sun of Righteousness shineth continually. “ Wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle.”

The Christian's life on earth is a time of waiting, a time of rich and blessed service, a time of gracious peace, and holy joy, and expectant hope, just

“ Waiting for the morning,
The brightest and the best,
When He will call us to His side,
To be with Him, His spotless bride ”

Jesus Christ our Joy

"We must dare to be happy . . . regarding ourselves always as the depositaries, and not as the authors of our joy."—*Amiel*.

"Therefore will I be grateful, and therefore will I rejoice ;
My heart is singing within me ! sing on, O heart and voice."

Walter Smith.

"O Lord ! our separate lives destroy !
Merge in Thy gold our soul's alloy,
Pain is our own, and Thou art joy."

Lord Houghton.

"His face
Shone like the countenance of a priest of old
Against the flame about a sacrifice,
Kindled by fire from heaven ; so glad was he."

Tennyson.

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of Life, Thou Light of men
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again."

St. Bernard.

"Eternal, cloudless 'Joy' is there,
Pleasures for evermore ;
For they who reach that blest abode
Go out from thence no more !"

J. E. J.

"There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness ;
he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find
Blessedness."—*Carlyle*.

6. Golan

THE sixth and last City of Refuge was Golan. It is described as Golan "in Bashan, of the Manassites" (Deut. iv. 43). It afterwards gave the name to a whole province, Gaulanitis, of New Testament times.

Golan was situated in the ancient land of mystery and romance. It was amongst, if not indeed, one of the giant cities of Bashan. And Bashan, to the imagination of the poet-prophets of Israel, was a land of beauty and of wealth, as well as a land of fortresses and of fastnesses of almost impregnable strength. The early inhabitants were of tremendous stature, in whose presence the Jewish spies of the land felt as if they were but grasshoppers. Never, throughout their national history, did the Israelites forget Sihon, king of the Amorites, or Og, the king of Bashan, who were laid low before their conquering army, through the intervention of the Most High. Nor will the name of Goliath of Gath ever be forgotten, while courage is honoured upon earth,

or faith regarded in heaven. The giants were laid low, and the giant cities were taken by the men of faith, and the national songs of Israel ever bore testimony to the mercy of God which endureth forever.

The name Golan is fruitful in meaning. Fürst derives it from גִּיל *gāl*, the verb signifying to turn oneself in a circle, to surround, to embrace, enclose; hence the noun, גִּלּוֹן *Golan*, a circuit, a district.

גִּיל is sometimes used to denote joy, probably because a whirling motion in a circle is indicative of a joyous feeling. Gesenius practically gives the same meaning, but notes that the verb גִּיל to go round, or about, also means to rejoice.

Dr. Patrick Fairbairn gives an interpretation, which, however, does not seem to rest on as good authority:—גָּלָה *gala*, to be captive, to go forth, to emigrate.

It requires no mystic to see the beauty and suggestiveness of the name, whichever interpretation be taken.

If Golan means, as has been claimed, circle, to embrace, enclose, or something surrounded, what a light it throws upon the keeping power of Christ?

The Christian believer has fled to Christ for refuge. He has laid hold by faith upon the hope set before him. That instant he is "in Christ"

yea more, Christ is in him "the hope of glory." There follows, most assuredly, that the believer has perfect security, that all "must be well," that whatever comes of blessing or of discipline, of what we call "weal or woe," judging by our poor earthly standards, will be for his welfare, that "all things" will be found to work together for his good.

The Christian's wonderful privileges in Christ as our Golan, our City of Refuge, have been beautifully expressed in lines breathing the spirit of a most trustful faith:—

"In the centre of the circle of the love of God I stand,
There can be no 'second causes,' all must come from His
dear hand.

"All is well ; for is it not my Father Who my life hath
planned ?"

"Though I cannot tell the reasons, I can trust, and so am
blest,

God is Love and God is faithful, so in perfect peace I
rest."

If again, Golan means as some scholars think, exile, it suggests lessons which we need ever to remember. For did not Christ pass from Heaven to this world in which we live? He voluntarily made Himself an exile from His Father's home of light. He came to earth a pilgrim and a wanderer. "The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head."

The Lord Jesus constantly declared "I am from above . . . I am not of this world. I

came out from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world and go unto the Father." And of mankind, in its purely human aspect, unregenerate, unrenewed in heart and mind, unspiritual and earth-bound, He said : " Ye are from beneath . . . ye are of this world." His great mission, for the sake of which He left His Father's house, was to seek and to save that which was lost. For to be earthly in aim and purpose, to be selfish in outlook upon life, to be unbelieving, thus living for things of sense and time, is to be lost and to have missed the supreme object of existence.

What possible bridge can there be between a humanity thus earth-trammelled and this heavenly life of God in Christ? "An abyss," as Godet points out, "separates heaven, life in God, the home of Jesus, and earth, the life of this world." Only Christ Himself can and does bridge the great gulf which sin has made between man and God. He is the bridge that spans the vast chasm of eternity. He is the way, the living way from Man to God, from Sin to Forgiveness, from Earth to Heaven.

Then the Exile-life becomes ours. We no longer walk by sight, but by faith. We are, as St. Peter says (using words which the Church in modern days would do well to remember), but "strangers, and pilgrims." This is an aspect of the Christian life which needs to be kept con-

stantly in view. It requires to be iterated and reiterated in a materialistic age, when there is so much in modern life which would close in our horizon, and restrict our view to the merely sensuous. We are exiles, strangers, here but for a time, our home is above, this is not our Fatherland. Our King to whom we give our heart's allegiance is Christ, our citizenship is in heaven. We are pilgrims on the earth, but sojourners for a little while, travellers passing through to their own country. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." The time of our stay is short. Our faces are Zionward. Our motto is Onward, Excelsior.

The most beautiful, and at the same time the most expressive meaning for Golan is Joy.

It makes no draft upon the imagination to enter into the exultant joy of the refugee, as fleeing from the dread avenger, he entered within the precincts of the City of Refuge. He would indeed rejoice, his whole being would exult in the thought of perfect safety. The awful dread of death which like a dark cloud had rested upon him, along the whole pathway which he had come, as like a frightened deer he had fled before his angry pursuers, gave way as the sun of hope came again into his sky, and as he passed within the gates the full flood-tide of joy burst upon him. His fears are now dead, joy reigns within and without,

"The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy."

And Christ is the believer's Joy.

The Christian is called to "rejoice in the Lord." "In Christ," he is safe, and blessed with a great and glorious provision for his every need, well, therefore, may he rejoice and sing.

The life of joy is the Christian's privilege, "joy and peace in believing." It differs from what we call happiness. The word "happy," comes from the Icelandic, "happ" which means good fortune, or luck. It is thus associated with outward conditions, and is connected with the enjoyment of something that brings pleasure into life. . But the root idea of joy is different. It is from within, and is literally a leaping forth, exulting, bursting upward from the well-spring of life. It is not the blessing of environment, but of character, independent of all else, save the presence of Christ. It is His gift, "My joy," the fruit of His Spirit.

It is an abiding Joy. In fact the wish and will of Christ is that every Christian should enter into the fulness of His joy, not for a brief and passing moment merely, but in a life of constant enjoyment. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you." What an inspiration this is in human life, in a world which the poets have called by every name that could suggest the evanescent, and the hard, and the trying, and the cruel. This world is to their minds, "all a fleeting show," a "bubble," a

“comedy,” a whirling “wheel,” a “naughty world,” a “canting world,” a “bleak” and “wintry” and “tough,” and “cold” world, in which “life’s but a walking shadow.” But it is the world into which we are called to live, to play our part, and to do our duty. And if as Sterne said, that even a smile would lengthen the fragment of our lives, what bliss to have within us a fountain of joy, the abiding presence of Christ.

It is a growing, expanding, ever-increasing Joy.

“The joy that is mine,” said the Lord Jesus, is to be yours. And that not in small measures but in its fulness. His purpose is lovingly expressed, “in order that your joy may be fulfilled,” or really perfected, springing up to the fulness of its content, flooding the whole being with an ever increasing and enduring gladness. It is eternal in its origin, and eternal in its sway. “Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away,” but Christ’s joy in the believer’s heart is immortal and is touched with the life of God. The stream never goes dry, when it issues from an ever-flowing fountain.

Jesus Christ then is our Golan, our City of Refuge, our true Joy. In His love we rest. Faith unites us to Him. Someone has said, Love and Joy “are twins of the same birth.” And if peace is love reposing, and faith is love reclining, joy is love exulting.

Joy is the music of the Christian life, the light of Christian gladness, caught by every trusting soul that looks unto Christ, and finds the experience fulfilled again, in the expressive words of a new translation, "they looked unto Him, and were radiant," irradiated with gladness, glowing with heavenly happiness, luminous with holy joy.

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